



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

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Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations

Germany's World Cup Brothels: 40,000 Women and Children at Risk of Exploitation through Trafficking

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I am privileged to speak to you about the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) concerns and planned actions surrounding the linkages between large scale sporting events like the 2006 World Cup and trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation. I would like to speak to you briefly about the situation as IOM view's it, share our planned activities to address those linkages and highlight a few other important actions taken by others.

Trafficking in persons represents one of the worst forms of exploitation of human beings facing the world today. For over a decade, IOM has collaborated with governments and civil society organizations to develop proactive, victim-centered strategies to prevent trafficking in persons, to identify and assist those individuals who have been exploited and abused, and target the demand for exploitation by strengthening the tools and resources available to law enforcement and the judiciary in the prosecution and conviction of traffickers.

Trafficking in persons is one of the most significant forms of transnational organized crime. Human traffickers prey on the most vulnerable, exploiting their hopes and dreams of a better life.

Traffickers constantly monitor the demand patterns, looking for opportunities to maximize their profits obtained through the illicit sale of human beings. The 2006 World Cup presents such an opportunity. As such, this hearing is an excellent opportunity to discuss ways in which together we can take innovative and proactive action, addressing both the supply and demand sides as they relate to the sexual exploitation of women and children.

Germany is a country of transit and destination for international trafficking, as well as one for internal trafficking. In 2004, the German Federal Office of Criminal Investigation registered 972 victims of trafficking, the majority of whom were victims of sexual exploitation. The estimated number of unreported cases is much higher. 75.5% of the identified victims were citizens from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Russia, Rumania, Poland, and Lithuania.

Since 1999, IOM, at the request of the German government, has facilitated the voluntary return of 772 victims of trafficking to their home country and provided them with reintegration assistance in their home communities to mitigate their vulnerability to being re-trafficked. In 2005, IOM Germany began

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a transnational project “Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking – Strengthening of National Supporters” where we serve as a bridge between German authorities, NGOs and counterparts in countries of origin, transit and destination.

It is critical that the German government, civil society and the international community look seriously at the potential links between this major sporting event and the potential increase in the demand for sexual exploitation of women and children. I would like to highlight a few ways in which IOM has begun doing so, in collaboration with the German government, international and national civil society organizations and the international media.

First, IOM has been approached by the MTV Europe Foundation to partner along with the Swedish International Development Agency in producing a television public service announcement addressing the demand side of sex trafficking. This is part of a larger, on-going multimedia Pan-European trafficking awareness and prevention campaign called EXIT (End Exploitation and Trafficking) which seeks to increase awareness and prevention of the trafficking of women and girls in Europe.

This PSA will be broadcast across all of Europe, including key countries of origin and Germany before and during the World Cup. We are in the final stages of negotiation on the agreement for this campaign that will be directed at both potential clients of prostitutes as well as those most vulnerable to becoming trafficked, thus targeting both the supply and demand components in which human traffickers exploit others for their own gain.

This campaign will raise awareness about the connection between major sporting events and trafficking for sexual exploitation, encouraging potential clients to educate themselves on what trafficking in persons is and how to take personal responsibility in reducing this form of exploitation, while providing a warning to potential victims.

Secondly, as part of a broad coalition of German government and civil society organizations, the IOM Mission in Germany has been in consultation with the German government about the potential links between the sexual exploitation of women and children and the World Cup. To date, there are 28 campaigns currently underway in Germany, five at the federal level with an additional 23 at the regional level. Implemented in close cooperation with political and civil society, the common theme of these campaigns is the identification and protection of potential victims of trafficking.

Finally, in key countries of origin like Ukraine, Moldova and other CIS Countries, IOM Missions are closely monitoring any shifts in recruitment and movement patterns and strategies that traffickers may employ to respond to this potential increase in demand. Our on-going prevention programs in these countries continue to offer information on trafficking in persons, safe mechanisms to migrate, and improved alternatives for those most at risk of sex trafficking.

Through such preventative programs, IOM works to reduce the potential supply of vulnerable individuals. IOM is also working closely with law enforcement and the judiciary to target the demand side by enhancing their investigative capacity and ensuring that cooperation and the sharing of criminal intelligence on organized criminal networks linked to trafficking in persons is facilitated across borders.

There are several other important initiatives that I would also like to take the opportunity to highlight at this time.

IOM would like to recognize the international campaign “Final Whistle – Stop Forced Prostitution,” which has been launched by the German National Council of Women and has received support from the German Football Federation and the German Police Union, amongst others. This campaign and its broad coalition of support demonstrate a commitment to respond proactively in addressing the links between trafficking for sexual exploitation and the 2006 World Cup.

The European Parliament has called for all member states, particularly Germany, to take “appropriate measures in the course of the World Cup football tournament to prevent trafficking of women.” This important step recognizes that trafficking in persons is not an isolated problem for any single country, but calls for a regional approach for governments to work together to address the potential impact of large scale sporting events on the sexual exploitation of women and children.

As part of their on-going response to address human trafficking, the German government continues to provide training to law enforcement officials on trafficking in persons, identification of victims and response strategies for law enforcement officials when they do identify a person who has been trafficked. These law enforcement officials are well situated to identify potential victims and link them to the extensive network of service providers already established within Germany.

IOM views the upcoming World Cup as an opportunity to maximize and increase knowledge on trafficking for sexual exploitation amongst potential clients of prostitutes and those most at risk to being exploited. With an estimated attendance of over three million fans and the additional millions more who will be watching the games on television, the opportunity to vastly improve the global understanding and knowledge of what is trafficking in persons, who potential victims are and what individuals and communities can do to help is enormous.

As an international community, we must capitalize on this important opportunity to continue to advocate for those individuals who have been victimized.

On a final note, I would like to raise your attention to another upcoming large scale sporting event that IOM, with resources from the U.S. State Department’s Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration has already begun preparing for, the 2007 World Cricket Cup, hosted by seven Caribbean countries with participation from an additional 16 countries. The lessons that we continue to learn from our combined efforts during the 2006 World Cup will be instrumental in shaping our strategies to proactively protect those most vulnerable and target the demand side as we plan for this next event.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, I thank you for the leadership of this Subcommittee in helping to call attention to this critical issue and for the opportunity to allow me to speak to you today.